

## HABENARIA CONOPSEA IN NORTH AMERICA

Among some miscellaneous collections of orchids that were recently sent to me for determination from the Herbarium of the University of North Carolina is a sheet that contains a solitary flowering plant collected by W. C. Coker (s.n.) "In damp peaty soil, Abisco, Labrador, July 19, 1921."

Although the inflorescence of this plant was unfortunately embedded in a generous amount of glue, it was possible to extricate enough of two flowers to make a dissection for study. This plant belongs to the *Habenaria conopsea* (L.) Benth. — *H. odoratissima* (L.) Franchet complex of Eurasia. Although the plant is unquestionably dwarfed, and the solitary linear leaf is more like those attributed to typical *H. odoratissima*, in my opinion the floral characters place this plant in *H. conopsea*.

In 1913, Britton and Brown included this species (as *Gymnadenia conopsea* (L.) R. Br.) in their *Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada* (p. 553) with the following note: "... otherwise known only from the Old World, [it] has been collected at Litchfield, Connecticut [in 1887]. The flower has a broad 3-lobed lip and a slender spur much longer than the ovary." I have been unable to locate in any herbarium a specimen from the above locality.

In 1952, in *Native Orchids of North America, North of Mexico* (p. 116), I considered the report by Britton and Brown to represent non-persistent waifs in Connecticut since the species, in the meantime, had not been observed again in Connecticut or anywhere else in this hemisphere. It now appears, however, that this orchid should be considered as an element of the flora of North America, whether it be indigenous or as a naturalized species introduced from Europe. It is most likely that the species occurs elsewhere in eastern North America and it has just been overlooked, possibly because it is either most uncommon or is to be found only in relatively isolated or inaccessible areas.

A description of the solitary plant found in Labrador is as follows:

Plant 12 cm. tall, rigidly erect, glabrous; rootstock thick, palmately divided (in our area similarly to that of *Habenaria viridis* (L.) R. Br. var. *bracteata* (Willd.) A. Gray); stem with several tubular sheaths at the base and two narrow somewhat foliaceous bracts above; only one leaf present that arises from within the sheaths at base of stem, linear, narrowly obtuse, apparently conduplicate, 6.5 cm. long and 3 mm. wide; inflorescence with about 15 densely placed flowers that are not all open, 2 cm. long; floral bracts ovate-lanceolate, long-acuminate, up to at least 8 mm. long; flowers small; dorsal sepal broadly elliptic, obtuse, about 4 mm. long and 2 mm. wide; lateral sepals similar to the dorsal one but slightly oblique; petals elliptic, obtuse, about 3.5 mm. long and 2 mm. wide; lip suborbicular-flabellate in outline, broadly cuneate below the middle, shallowly 3-lobed above with the lobes bluntly rounded, about 4 mm. long; disc with 5 veins, with only the central vein unbranched and extending to the apex of the mid-lobe; spur cylindrical, curved, 8-10 mm. long, nearly twice as long as the pedicellate ovary.

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